

Honesty, First Law Of The Range, Important Factor In Hunting Deals

By Monte Noelke

11-27-69

Page 5

MERTZON — Charging sportsmen for hunting is becoming a good sideline for ranchers. Where game is thick they are enjoying a sizable rakeoff from their deer leases. But out here in this part of the Shortgrass Country, it takes a lot of effort to make a hunting deal. As with most of our projects, we are on the edge of the pay lode.

However, through hard work, games lease development programs can bring in the hunting money. You can't sit back on your haunches and sign up the redcaps, but by using the following tactics, marginal areas can be made commercially profitable.

The first step is to make friends with meat processing plant owners. To get anything rolling in the hunting line, you must have a source of deer horns. Of course, the larger the spreads, the more enticing the grounds will look to the gamesman. So be sure to select the largest of the discards.

Also, use care in parading the horns about the pastures. Do not salt them in large piles, deer are neater than people, but the way they scatter their horns during shedding season is an insult to the anti-litter league.

At the same time the horns are being distributed, start making reproductions of horn rubs on the trees. The best copies are made by taking a horseshoe rasp and cutting the bark down to the trunk. These should be spaced at about 500 yard intervals and placed close enough to the roads where they can be easily seen.

During this process, it is important to check for certain that all last year's tags have been removed from the antlers and no tell-tale human signs have been left around the rubs. Keep in mind that city folks aren't as honest and trusting as us country people. So do not take chance of arousing their suspicions.

The next move is to establish the presence of other species of game animals. Wild boar tusks are readily available out of Old Mexico. For the wild turkey aura, look to the mail order houses in the southern states for the beards and to local produce houses for the feathers. Once you catch on to decorating the land, you can make an empty pasture look like a game paradise ready for a meeting of the national taxidermists' association.

Use your own judgment on how far to carry these merchandising procedures. In other words, do not get carried away with the idea and hang part of your wife's old fur coat in the bushes, but be sure to use anything like bear claws or panther teeth, if you can find them. Do remember that honesty in the commercial game business is always one policy to consider, therefore don't get so far out of line that you might get caught before the contract is signed.

The first year will be the hardest. When the stage is one set, the ranch can be leased indefinitely without too many problems. Occasionally, you may run into a smart alec who knows the difference between a piece of plastic bone and a real one, but don't let that bother you, because the code of the rangelands is so far superior to the cities, that we need not apologize to anyone.